

Crimes Reported in Cambridge

January 1 to December 31, 2003

Crime	Jan.-Dec. 2002	Jan-Dec. 2003	Percentage Change	Dec. 2002	Dec. 2003
Murder	6	3	Inc.*	1	0
Rape	10	7	Inc.*	0	0
Stranger	1	1	Inc.*	0	0
Non-Stranger	9	6	Inc.*	0	0
Robbery	195	229	+17%	23	21
Commercial	40	41	+3%	2	8
Street	155	188	+21%	21	13
Agg. Assault	284	271	-5%	23	21
Burglary	720	651	-10%	55	44
Commercial	198	134	-33%	3	9
Residential	522	517	-1%	52	35
Larceny	2764	2389	-14%	178	174
Building	521	518	-1%	37	36
Motor Vehicle	748	657	-12%	61	51
Person	394	331	-16%	26	29
Bicycle	264	212	-20%	7	3
Shoplifting	452	358	-21%	27	37
Residence	203	183	-10%	12	14
MV Plate	94	75	-20%	4	2
Services	26	24	-8%	1	1
Misc.	62	31	-50%	3	1
Auto Theft	425	419	-1%	22	25
Total Violent	495	510	+3%	47	42
Total Prop.	3909	3459	-12%	255	243
Index Total	4404	3969	-10%	302	285

*Note: Inc = percentages are not calculated for numbers so small as to lead to a statistically misleading percentage.

Serious Crime Declines 10% in Cambridge in 2003

Crime Index: The 3,969 serious crimes recorded in Cambridge in 2003 represents the lowest Uniform Crime Reporting Index number reported to the FBI in over forty years. Eisenhower was President the last time fewer than 4000 serious crimes were registered in the City. The serious crime index had not varied from a total of between 4350 and 4450 incidents for the past six years. The 2003 decline of 10%, 435 fewer incidents then in 2002, is the third largest yearly decline since 1980. Further analysis indicates that despite declines in Murder, Rape and Aggravated Assault, violent crime increased by 3% in 2003, as these drops were offset by a 17% increase in Robbery. The 10% decline in Burglary and the 14% drop in Larceny propelled the 12% slide in property crime when compared with the 2002 figures.

Murder: There were no murders recorded in Cambridge during December. Mary Toomey, 75, of 124 Berkshire Street became the third murder victim of 2003 when her body was discovered in a duffle bag at her residence on 11/27/03. Toomey was the victim of multiple stab wounds. Anthony Dibenedetto (DOB: 12/26/1956, 124 Berkshire Street) was arrested at the scene in relation to the homicide. The second murder of 2003 in Cambridge occurred on Sunday, June 8th at 4PM at the corner of Mass and Walden. Three days later, warrants were issued for Markendy Jean of Malden. On July 18th, Jean was rendered back to Massachusetts from Florida where he had fled. The first murder of the year in Cambridge was recorded in the early-morning hours of Saturday, April 12th, 2003. Alexander Pring-Wilson, 25, a Harvard University graduate student was arrested for the stabbing death of Michael Colono, an 18-year-old Cambridgeport resident. The incident involved the escalation of a verbal exchange into a street fight on Western Avenue. Pring-Wilson was released on bail on May 13th. There were six murders reported in Cambridge in 2002.

Rape: The first stranger-to-stranger sexual assault of 2003 was reported on the night of December 2nd, 2003 on Arrow Street in Harvard Square. Prior to this assault with intent to rape, the other six sexual assaults in Cambridge during 2003 were categorized as non-stranger, acquaintance incidents. Rape fell from ten incidents in 2002 to seven recorded crimes in 2003.

Robbery: Robbery increased from 195 incidents in 2002 to 229 reports in 2003 to register a 17% increase. The majority of the incline in this target crime can be attributed to the sharp rise in street robberies from 155 incidents in 2002 to 188 reports in 2003 to record a 21% increase. There were 8 fewer street robberies this December than last year. The majority of the street robberies in December were clustered in the Central Square neighborhoods of Area 4, Cambridgeport and Riverside. There were no discernible patterns identified during the month of December

There were eight commercial robberies reported in December of 2003. Of these eight incidents, there were three additional bank robberies recorded. Twenty of the 41 commercial robberies (+3%) registered in Cambridge in 2003 occurred in January and December. Banks were the targets in 18 of the 41 commercial robberies in 2003.

Burglary: The index crime of Burglary declined 10% in 2003. Housebreaks, which were down 36% after the first eight months of 2003, concluded the year with a slight 1% reduction. Major daytime housebreak patterns in Mid-Cambridge, Peabody and North Cambridge between September and the first week of December whittled away at what would have been an impressive decline. The arrest of a Somerville resident appears to have eradicated the majority of the activity in Mid-Cambridge and Peabody. The North Cambridge pattern, which was still active at the end of November, was abolished after warrants were issued for a Somerville woman on December 4th 2003. Commercial burglary recorded a dramatic 33% decrease and the total of 133 commercial breaks is at a 40- year low and there have been just 34 unrelated and scattered incidents since September 1, 2003.

Larceny: The 14% decline in larceny in 2003 was propelled by sharp decreases in thefts from motor vehicles, from the person (-16%), bicycles (-21%) and shoplifting (-19%). There are no major patterns to report.

Auto Theft: Auto theft declined by 1% in 2003. There was only one auto theft pattern, a two-day spree of Honda thefts in West Cambridge in April, identified in 2003.